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2 November 1956

Memorandum for: Mr. Paul

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From : [REDACTED] (x3426)

Subject : Symington Committee, follow-up question on BEAR production.

1. The following are suggested paragraphs for transmittal to the committee, written in accordance with the DCI's instruction that new figures should be given for BISON as well as BEAR:

"At the time of the DCI's testimony before the committee in April 1956, no agreed national estimate of current production of BEAR turboprop heavy bombers had been made. Since that time, however, we have undertaken a complete review of all evidence on Soviet heavy bombers. Based on this review, it is our agreed national estimate that about 40 BEAR aircraft had been produced in the USSR by 1 July 1956, and that about 30 were in Soviet operational units at that time. This review also resulted in a new estimate of Soviet production of BISON jet heavy bombers, and our current agreed national estimate is that about 40 BISON aircraft had been produced by 1 July 1956, with about 35 in operational units. These figures, which are lower than those given to the Committee in April, result from evidence which indicates that, probably at least in part because of production difficulties, BISON and BEAR production in 1955 and 1956 was at a considerably lower rate than we had previously believed it to be."

"There has been no change in our estimate that by mid-1959 the USSR will probably have about 400 BISON and 300 BEAR aircraft in operational units. However, because of the lower current production rates indicated above, we now estimate that total cumulative production of these aircraft by mid-1959 will be about 470 BISON and 430 BEAR."

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2. For your information, here is the way the new figures stack up against the DCI's testimony of April 1 1956:

BEAR

	April testimony		Current estimate	
	1 April '56	mid-59	1 July '56	mid-59
Cumulative production	not given	460	40	430
In operational units	45 minus	300	30	300

BISON

	April testimony		Current estimate	
	1 April '56	mid-59	1 July '56	mid-59
Cumulative production	100	700	40	470
In operational units	45 plus	400	35	400

3. I checked with the Air Force today. Their copy of Gen. Twining's transcript of 19 July shows that they answered the committee's request for new estimates of Soviet aircraft production and strength by saying that no new estimates had been made. They supplied no figures, despite what the published version of the Twining transcript says. Their statement was perfectly true as of 19 July, since the new national estimate was not completed until August.

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- 2 -

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